

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----049666 311906Z /44

O P 311547Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9595
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T LONDON 14043

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MOPS PINS LE SY IS SA
SUBJECT: HMG AND LEBANON SITUATION

REF: (A) STATE 221467 (B) STATE 221464

1. EMBOFF SUMMARIZED REF A FOR ACTING HEAD OF NEAR
EAST DEPARTMENT POWELL AND HIS ARAB/ISRAELI DESK

OFFICER, STRESSING USG CONCERN OVER "SIGNIFICANT
DETERIORATION IN SECURITY SITUATION", POSSIBILITY
SYRIANS MAY HAVE DECIDED TO DESTROY MILITIAS, AND
ISRAELIS' CONCERN THAT IF SITUATION ESCALATES THEY
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WOULD FEEL COMPELLED TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED.

2. POWELL WAS SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK BY EMBOFF'S
PRESENTATION, OBSERVING THAT HE HAD NO REPORTING
OR ANALYSIS WHICH SUGGESTED EITHER "SIGNIFICANT
DETERIORATION" OF LEBANESE SECURITY SITUATION, NOR
DID HE HAVE ANY INFORMATION SUGGESTING SYRIANS HAD

TAKEN MAJOR DECISION ON MILITIAS. IN FACT, WHEN UK AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS HAD SUGGESTED A FEW DAYS AGO THAT HE MAKE NEW DEMARCHE TO SARG URGING RESTRAINT IN LEBANON, DEMARCHE NEVER MADE BECAUSE NEITHER LONDON NOR UK EMBASSY BEIRUT WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE THE "NEW" TALKING POINTS WHICH BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS HAD REQUESTED. EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT WHETHER SYRIANS HAD MADE DECISION OR NOT, FACT IS THAT MANY LEBANESE ARE CONVINCED THAT THEY MAY HAVE, AND THAT IS WHAT REALLY MATTERS.

3. SYRIAN STRATEGY: POWELL AFFIRMED HMG ASSESSMENT OF SYRIAN INTENTIONS CONTINUES TO BE THAT SARG WILL NOT SEEK MILITARY SOLUTION TO MILITIA PROVOCATION BECAUSE SUCH ACTION WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE TIME, DURING WHICH ISRAELIS ALMOST CERTAIN TO REACT.

4. HMG ACTION: POWELL WILL CONSULT IMMEDIATELY WITH HIS AMBASSADORS IN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS, PASSING ON OUR LATEST ASSESSMENT, AND WILL LET US KNOW ASAP HOW BRITISH CONCLUDE THEY CAN BEST SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: ASKED SPECIFICALLY WITH WHOM WE WERE CONSULTING ON LEBANON, EMBOFF CONFIRMED WE ARE MAKING SIMILAR APPROACHES TO THE FRENCH AND WEST GERMANS AND CONTINUE TO BE IN TOUCH WITH INTERESTED
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PARTIES IN THE AREA. EMBOFF DID NOT REPEAT NOT REPORT OUR IMMINENT REQUEST TO THE SAUDIS THAT THEY CONSIDER UTILITY OF CONVENING ROUND TABLE MEETING OF CONCERNED ARAB GOVERNMENTS AND/OR LEBANESE FACTIONS. REQUEST AUTHORITY TO INFORM BRITISH OF RESULTS AMBASSADOR WEST'S CONVERSATION WITH SAG TO POWELL. PRESUMABLY, POWELL WILL RAISE UTILITY OF APPROACHING SAUDIS WITH US VERY SOON.

STREATOR

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NNN

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